

Dear Judge Brodie:

It's been over a year since I was arrested and nothing has changed my life more drastically than this. In retrospect, I think about all the different ways that night could've ended. If I could, I would want to meet the agent who I ran toward and just apologize for what I did. Although I can't change the past and stop myself from doing what I did, I can and I do take responsibility for my actions and learn from them.

Being confined by these walls has taught me something that I didn't know how to do so well. They taught me how to think. They introduced me to the world of books and have led me to so many insights. I've tried to use my stay here to the best of my ability by enrolling in Essex County College, participating in a wide-range of programs, and most of all, reading. A concept that is highly emphasized here is love. A genuine love that is so fulfilling it leaves a person needless.

I came across a saying that affected me deeply and was said by a famous Civil Rights activist, Martin Luther King, Jr. He said, "Darkness cannot remove Darkness, only light can do that; Hate cannot remove Hate, only love can do that." I mention this because I was once around someone who supported the complete opposite. This person would lavish hate with so called "reason" and present it as such. I knew it was wrong then, and I am adamant of its absurdity now. We're in a world where hate is tearing us apart, and the only solution to that is love. I made a mistake of keeping this person's company. I should have separated myself and distanced myself as much as I could from him. Experiencing this has made me question all the influences around me. Since then I've been cautious of whom I call a friend and plan to continue doing so when I leave.

When I leave I plan to get back in college. I took an introductory course in psychology and it expanded my knowledge of what we are as humans. It fascinates me to know why and how people do what they do. It also helps me look within myself and improve on my faults. I would like to pursue a degree in psychology and work with teens who went through the same "identity crisis" as I did. I also have a passion for the culinary arts, specifically pizza, as well as some other Italian dishes. I intend to learn some traditional recipes from my culture and fuse them with my love for pizza. I've even thought of opening a family-owned restaurant. I hope to give back to my community and exert a positive influence as well as giving back to it.

Most of all, Judge Brodie, I just want to get back to my family. It would mean the world to me to be back home and be around the people who care for me most. I ask you, Your Honor, to grant me that second chance so that I can make up for my wrongs and continue doing what's right.

Sincerely,



Imran Rabbani